

June 2023 Newsletter



INSIDE THIS

ISSUE:

Women's Role In
Ukraines Postwar
Recovery

P.1

The Nuclear Threat
Is Real

P.2-P.4

Request For
Support: Sign The
Petition

P.5

Haylies Corner

P.6

Ploughshares
Calgary Society AGM

P.7

Events

P.8

Good News

P.9 & P.10

Spolumbo's Fundraiser

P.11

**PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY
SOCIETY PRESENTS:**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CALGARY PEACE TABLE ON UKRAINE & RUSSIA

**JOIN US IN PERSON AT PARKDALE
UNITED CHURCH OR ON ZOOM**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14TH

7:30PM MDT

Please RSVP to: office@ploughsharescalgary.ca

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Want to donate to
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If you haven't yet made
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WOMEN'S ROLE IN UKRAINES POSTWAR RECOVERY

Opinion by Melanne Verveer and Jess Keller
 May 30, 2023

Summarized by Haylie Smith

Natalia Karbowska has been working in overdrive since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, providing funding and humanitarian assistance to thousands of Ukrainian women. Karbowska is the director of strategic development for the Ukrainian Women's Fund, the only one of its kind in the country. The organization has been working 24/7 in order to issue rapid-response grants that will help provide emergency assistance to families fleeing the war, 90 percent of them being women and children. She also distributes food, water and hygiene products to women and girls across the country.

Karbowska says that women are the majority of internally displaced people (IDPs). The women do not have jobs and are unable to feed themselves and their families. She stated that people often see women only as victims, which prevents us from seeing them as a solution.

The Ukraine Recovery Conference, which will be held later this month, is meant to encourage private investment in the regions of Ukraine that have been the most affected by bombings to address the multi-billion postwar reconstruction costs. Karbowska believes that placing gender equality and women's meaningful participation at the forefront of these efforts is key to success. Women and civil society are central to the planning, distribution and oversight of funds in the reconstruction effort. Local women-led groups have expanded their role in communities and are using their networks to aid people. As they have access to marginalized and hard-to-reach communities, those women-led groups are the well suited to be contributing to recovery discussions.

In Ukraine, women represent the majority of a highly educated and skilled workforce so they are well positioned to help strengthen anti-corruption measures, modernize the energy sector, and drive Ukraine's reform agenda. The war in Ukraine serves as a reminder of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace & security (WPS). Authorized in 2000, this resolution calls for the meaningful inclusion of women in all areas of peace-building and conflict resolution, including post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.



THE NUCLEAR THREAT IS REAL

The Hill Times
May 26, 2023

Reported by Douglas Roche

EDMONTON—Despite Prime Minister Justin Trudeau signing onto a G7 statement in Hiroshima, Japan, on May 19 calling for “meaningful dialogue” on nuclear disarmament issues, Global Affairs Canada is digging deeper in its opposition to Canada attending a meeting this fall of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

NATO is vigorously opposed to the treaty, which calls for the outlawing of nuclear weapons, a stand that directly contradicts the organization’s claim that nuclear weapons are the “supreme guarantee” of security. Canada meekly goes along with NATO, even though UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the new treaty “historic.”

The Prohibition Treaty, which entered into force in 2021 and is now ratified by 68 states, held its first meeting of state last year. Despite frowns from NATO headquarters, four NATO states—Germany, Norway, the Netherlands and Finland—attended the meeting as “observers.” But they received a lot of blowback from NATO bosses for their attendance.

So it seems that a possible slap on the wrist now cowers Global Affairs Canada, the very department that, years ago, led the world in developing the Anti-Personnel Landmines Treaty, the International Criminal Court, and the Responsibility to Protect doctrine. Even though the prime minister has said publicly that Canada would remain engaged in nuclear disarmament discussions “in all multilateral fora,” it appears that Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly did not get the message.



THE NUCLEAR THREAT IS REAL

Here we have, on the one hand, Trudeau signing onto the “G7 Leaders’ Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament,” which pledged to promote “meaningful dialogue,” and, on the other hand, Global Affairs Canada saying that the Prohibition Treaty does not count as a legitimate forum for dialogue.

No wonder the public doesn’t know what’s going on in the nuclear disarmament field.

The lengthy G7 statement, done at the behest of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who comes from Hiroshima, seems at first glance to support nuclear disarmament. It says: “We reaffirm our commitment to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, achieved through a realistic, pragmatic and responsible approach.” That sentence, however, is loaded with code words that allow the nuclear powers, who continue to possess 12,705 nuclear weapons to escape their obligation, under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to pursue negotiations for nuclear disarmament, an obligation that has been reinforced by the International Court of Justice.

The nuclear powers cling to the NPT while at the same time ignoring its central provision. That is why the Prohibition Treaty came into existence.

For Trudeau to present himself as all for dialogue on nuclear matters while his officials shut the door on Canada attending, as an observer, the second meeting of the Prohibition Treaty to be held in New York in November is a profound failure in our diplomacy. I think that, if a motion emerged from Parliament calling for Canada to attend the Prohibition Treaty meeting, they would reconsider their opposition. We’ll have to see how much Parliament cares about this issue.





THE NUCLEAR THREAT IS REAL

However, the news is not all bad. Canada—long a champion of a possible Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, which would ban the production of fissile materials—is now willing to sponsor such negotiations in the UN General Assembly. Hitherto, Canada has always maintained that such negotiations must be held in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, which operates on the consensus rule, meaning that any one state (in this case Pakistan) can for years block progress. In the General Assembly, whose work is gaining in stature as a result of the stalemated Security Council, the majority vote wins the day; that is how the Prohibition Treaty was produced.

All this is backdrop for the gravest crisis facing nuclear disarmament since the first atomic bombs destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. In the past two years, in addition to Russia's unprecedented threats to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine, nuclear risks have worsened: from the fast development and modernization of nuclear arsenals, renewed dynamics of arms races, and continuing proliferation pressures. North Korea and Iran are vivid examples of what happens—with more to come—if nuclear weapons are not eliminated through a process of negotiations with requisite verification techniques.

The nuclear threat is real and is made all the more urgent by the collapsing international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament infrastructure. A first priority, despite the Ukraine war, is to get the United States and Russia back to negotiations for the resumption and extension of the New START Treaty, which constrains the numbers of their strategic nuclear weapons. Both these powerful states should agree to a No First Use policy and take their advanced weapons off alert status.

In the end, Canadian policy on nuclear disarmament can be summed up in one word: ambiguity. It's not a pretty word, nor is it a pretty sight watching Global Affairs Canada and the Prime Minister's Office trying to get their stories straight.



REQUEST FOR SUPPORT: SIGN THE PETITION

Petition to the Government of Canada

Whereas:

- The global cost of preparing for war (\$2T per year) plus added rebuilding costs following wars and armed conflicts are unsustainable. This money is urgently needed to address shared global challenges in climate change, sustainable development and poverty reduction. IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) warns we only have limited time to prevent an irreversible crisis;
- A United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) has been proposed. UNEPS would be a '911 first responder' ensuring rapid and reliable UN responses preventing armed conflict, protecting civilians at risk, addressing human needs in complex emergencies and encouraging military build-down and wider disarmament. It complements existing arrangements, with a gender-equitable composition of civilian, police and military personnel recruited world-wide;
- With the immediate availability of a dedicated UN service, there would be lower incidence of armed conflict and related crimes. With a capacity to intervene promptly, the UN could stem the escalation and spread of violent conflict, reducing need for later, larger, longer and costlier UN peace operations; and
- As a UN service for diverse crises, the proposed UNEPS includes teams to provide an array of useful services to help, which are more appealing to people in trouble, and more relevant and cost-effective for the UN and its Member States.

We, the undersigned, citizens of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to build a coalition of countries supporting the formation of UNEPS, raise the issue at the UN General Assembly and other relevant UN bodies, and ensure the proposed UNEPS is a Canadian priority for both the new UN Agenda for Peace and the 2024 UN Summit of the Future.

To sign the petition, click [here](#)





The History of Pride Month

What is Pride Month?

Pride month is a celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) communities. This month is a time to recognize the rights and achievements of people belonging to this community, which include: the right to marry, right to adopt, and legal equality.

History of Pride Month in Canada

On August 28, 1971, roughly 100 people from Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and the surrounding areas gathered in the pouring rain at Parliament Hill for Canada's First Gay Liberation Protest and March. They presented a petition to the government with a list of ten demands for equal rights and protections.

In 1973, Pride Week was established for national LGBT rights. This week-long celebration included various festivities including dances, art, picnics and film screenings in cities across the country. The first unofficial Pride Parade in Canada was held in Vancouver in 1978. In 1981, the official municipal Pride Parade was held in Vancouver. Vancouver and Montreal hosted the first two official Pride marches and festivals in the country.

Why Celebrate Pride Month?

Pride is a celebration of people coming together in love and friendship, to show how far LGBTQ+ rights have come, and how in some places there's still work to be done. It also calls for people to remember how damaging homophobia was and still can be.

Pride is all about being proud of who you are no matter who you love!



PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY SOCIETY AGM

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues well past the one-year mark, many of us are thinking about possible pathways to peace. Please join us to learn more about obstacles to a ceasefire and suggestions for ways to overcome these. We will view video excerpts of the Peace Table for Ukraine and Russia, a recent event organized by Canadian Pugwash, featuring a diverse panel of experts.

We will discuss their ideas, and create a list of reasonable and compelling recommendations. Our intention is to include these in subsequent letters to government, embassies and others, encouraging action towards peace, as well as providing practical suggestions.

Come enjoy the company of fellow concerned Calgarians, sample some refreshments, and share in this interesting and important discussion.

Speakers featured in the video excerpts include:

- Ernie Regehr Canadian Pugwash member and author of *Disarming Conflict: Why Peace Cannot Be Won on the Battlefield*
- Wolfgang Sporrer Adjunct Professor- Conflict Management, The Hertie School, Berlin/German (OSCE, Minsk Accords)
- Sergio Duarte former UN High Representative for Disarmament
- Sergey Batsanov Russian diplomatic service from 1975 to 1993, former Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, currently Director of the Geneva Office of Pugwash Conferences
- Maria Levchenko Peacebuilding Officer with Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR)

We strongly encourage everyone to attend in person if possible. We will meet in the spacious church auditorium, with lovely garden views and windows to open for fresh air. However, if attending in person is not possible, we also offer an opportunity to join us via Zoom.

Meeting Time: Wednesday June 14, 2023 @ 7:30pm (MDT)

In-Person Meeting: Parkdale United Church auditorium (2919 - 8 Ave. N.W.)

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81561169806pwd=dmZwUjFBWGRhOW80NVZmdTR5S21pdz09>

Meeting ID: 815 6116 9806

Passcode: 110177

Kindly RSVP to:
office@ploughsharescalgary.ca



EVENTS

- On Tuesday, June 6th, **Calgary Justice Film Festival will be holding their Annual General Meeting** starting at 7:00pm at River Park Church (3818 14A St SW). Learn more about Calgary Justice Film Festival's activities over the past year and plans for the future; participate in governance decisions.
- On Thursday, June 8th, **Collaborative Design Group is hosting its first fundraising event - Collaborate for Community 2023** from 2:00pm - 8:00pm. They will be raising money for Habitat for Humanity Southern Alberta through the sale of paintings and art from local artists, monetary donations, and raffle tickets for door prizes on the day of the event. The event will take place at our studio with food and drinks, live painting, live music by The Backyard Betties, and time to connect with community members. The event will be located at 4521 Manhattan Rd SE. The event is free.
- On Thursday, June 8th, **Friends of Fish Creek will be hosting Calgary Connect: Maintaining Ecological Connectivity** starting at 7:30pm. Join Nicole Kahal, Conservation Analyst with the Miistakis Institute to learn how Miistakis and partners are using wildlife camera-traps, spatial modeling, and municipal planning to understand how we can protect what's left of the natural connections in the Calgary metropolitan region. Tickets are available on eventbrite.ca. The event will be located at Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre, 15931 Woodpath Road SW.
- On Thursday, June 29th, **Community Natural Foods will be hosting Bee the movement** starting at 7:30pm. Chicken keeping, rooftop gardens, vertical farming and creating community – Bee the Movement invites you to dive into the dynamic world of urban farming and greening. But bee warned: prepare to leave this workshop with an inspiring new perspective of our urban spaces (and maybe even a strong desire to grow your own tomato!). The event is free. The event will be located at Community Natural Foods, 1304 10 Avenue SW.





GOOD NEWS

- This past winter, Gaile Simpson offered her garage to two people experiencing homelessness. A fire was lit inside the garage and got out of control. While the insurance company determined that the fire was an accident, the company had actually gone ahead and canceled her home insurance without her knowledge. In order to get her house insurance back, Simpson was told she must demolish her garage, which could cost thousands of dollars. Simpson is on a fixed income and cannot afford the demolition. A friend of Simpsons reached out to JustJunk, a Calgary company that offers junk removal services, and the company is doing the demolition for free. Deb Derbyshire, owner of JustJunk says that they just knew that they needed to help her out any way that they could. A GoFundMe fundraiser is also being set up to help Simpson recover her belongings and other needs. (Global News Calgary, June 3rd, 2023)
- Back in 2020, 18 year old Rehand Staton was accepted into Harvard University after studying at the University of Maryland while also working full-time as a garbage man. Now, three years later, Staton has graduated Harvard University and has a job lined up in a New York law firm. Staton's grades were so bad that he was rejected from every college that he applied to and he eventually took a job as a sanitation worker. He soon found support from his colleagues, who pushed him to believe that he was intelligent and could achieve his dreams. The sanitation team helped him to enroll at Bowie State University, after which his grades improved from terrible to 4.0—landing him a spot at Maryland State University. Staton was eventually accepted into Harvard for the 2020 semester. After he was accepted into Harvard, Staton started giving back. He started a non-profit called the Reciprocity Effect, which works with support staff affiliated with educational institutions (janitors). He has been able to crowdfund financial assistance for these hardworking individuals and honour them with recognition and awards. (Good News Network, May 30th, 2023)



Photo Credits: Instagram



GOOD NEWS

- 17 year old highschool Sloan McGinn Thompson accidentally left his wallet on a Calgary bus on his way home. His wallet contained important ID cards, a transit pass, and \$140 in cash. The driver of the bus, Dominique Padmarah, didn't realize anything had happened until he reached the Pembroke terminal. That's when someone approached him with the wallet. He went ahead and followed Calgary Transit procedure and wrote down a report and immediately turned over the wallet to his supervisor, Inderjit Chauhan. Chauhan identified the wallet owners' address as in the south of the city, and called a colleague at Chinook station. He met his colleague, Gurpal Guraya at Chinook station and handed over the wallet. Guraya then went to the address identified on the teen's ID card and rang the doorbell. When there was no answer, Guraya went to the neighbour's house and left the wallet with them. The following afternoon, Guraya received an email from McGinn Thompson's mother, who received the wallet from her neighbour. She then messaged her son, who was staying at his fathers' house and hadn't even mentioned the missing wallet to his mother, to let him know that his wallet was back safe and sound thanks to the efforts of the Calgary Transit team. (Global News Calgary, June 2nd, 2023)
- 50 years after their disappearance, platypuses have returned home to a national park near Sydney, Australia. A joint project from the University of New South Wales, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and WWF, conservationists released 5 females last week into Hacking River as the first stage of the reintroduction. The collaboration wants to see burrows and territorial establishment among the river systems of the 58-square-mile national park from the females before they release the males. "Royal National Park is Australia's oldest national park and I am pleased this historic reintroduction will help re-establish a sanctuary for this iconic species," said NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe. (Good News Network, May 16th, 2023)



Photo Credits: Good News Network





SPOLUMBO'S FUNDRAISER

Thank you to everyone who supported Ploughshares Calgary Society by purchasing Spolumbo's products from us! **We were able to raise over \$1400** which will be of great help to us and our efforts to continue working to create a just world at peace!

Are you looking for ways to enjoy your Spolumbo's sausages? Look no further! Click [here](#) to check out some amazing recipes.

